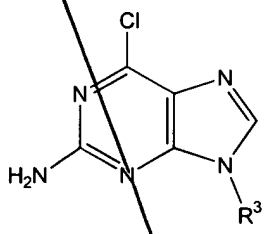
In the Claims:

Please cancel claim 5 without prejudice.

Please amend the claims as follows:

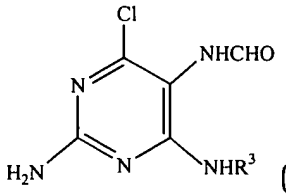
Claim 9 (Twice amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

wherein R^3 is hydrogen; hydroxyl or a protected hydroxyl; a C_{3-7} carbocyclic group optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; a C_{2-8} hydrocarbyl group, wherein carbon atoms may be substituted by one or more heteroatoms such as N, O or S, and wherein such C_{2-8} hydrocarbyl group may be optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; or a C_{4-7} heterocyclic group, wherein at least one carbon atom is replaced by a N, O, or S atom and wherein such C_{4-7} heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen; provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, [or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)

B1

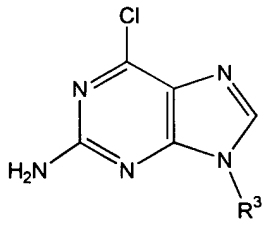


(VI)

wherein R^3 is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond] as defined above, with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

18. (Amended) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)

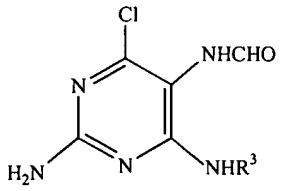
B2



(VII)

wherein R^3 is a C_{3-7} carbocyclic group optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen, a C_{2-8} hydrocarbyl group, wherein carbon atoms may be substituted by one or more heteroatoms such as N, O or S and wherein such C_{2-8} hydrocarbyl group may be optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen;or a C_{4-7} heterocyclic group, wherein at least one carbon atom is replaced by a N, O, or S atom atom and wherein such C_{4-7} heterocyclic group may be optionally substituted with C_{1-4}alkyl, C_{1-4}alkoxy, hydroxyl or protected hydroxyl, azido, phosphonyl, or halogen provided that such groups are not attached by a glycosidic bond, comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)

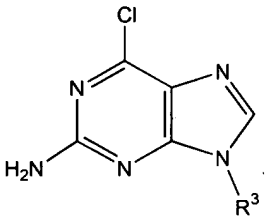
B2



(VI)

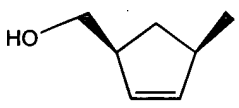
wherein R^3 is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] as defined above with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

19. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

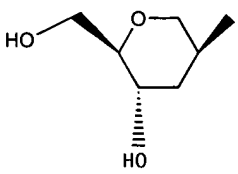
wherein R^3 is selected from:

a. 

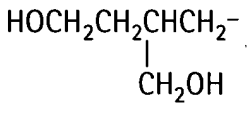
;

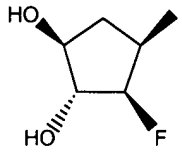
b. H;

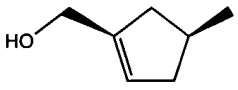
B2

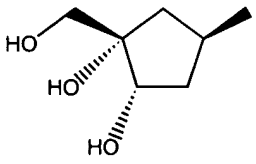
c.  ;

d. $\underline{(CH_3C(O)}OCH_2)_2CHCH_2CH_2-$;

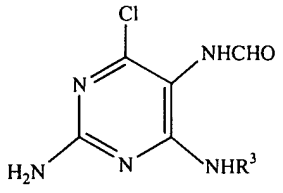
e.  ;

f.  ;

g.  ; and

h. 

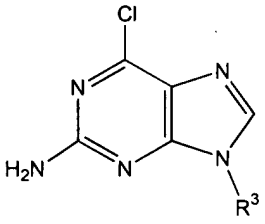
comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)



(VI)

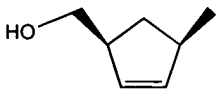
wherein R^3 is [hydrogen or any group which is not attached by a glycosidic bond,] as defined above with a trialkylorthoformate in the presence of an aqueous acid.

20. A process for the preparation of a compound of formula (VII)



(VII)

wherein R^3 is



comprising [ring closure of] reacting a compound of formula (VI)